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Fabian Bachrach

DR. HARRY L. SHAPIRO
Newly Elected President of the American
Eugenics Society

EDITORIAL COMMENT

*New Officers of
A.E.S. Elected*

Dr. Harry L. Shapiro, Chairman of the Department of Anthropology at the American Museum of Natural History, has been elected President of the American Eugenics Society to serve from 1956 through 1958. A director of the Eugenics Society for many years, he has just completed a three-year term as its Vice-President.

Dr. Shapiro is also Professor of Anthropology at Columbia University and Research Associate in Anthropology at the Bishop Museum, Honolulu. A past president of the American Anthropological Association and the American Ethnological Association, he is a member of the National Academy of Sciences. He was chairman of the Division of Anthropology and Psychology of the National Research Council from 1932 to 1933. His chief fields of research are physical anthropology, human biology, race mixture, and population. Field work was carried on in Polynesia, Puerto Rica, the Orient, the eastern Pacific, Alaska, and the southwestern United States.

In addition to contributions to many scientific journals, Dr. Shapiro has published two books: "The Heritage of the Bounty" (1936) and "Migration and Environment" (1939).

Alan F. Guttmacher, M.D. head of the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology at The Mount Sinai Hospital in New York City, is the newly elected Vice-President of

the Eugenics Society. He is also clinical professor of Obstetrics and Gynecology at Columbia Medical School. He was formerly chief of Obstetrics at The Sinai Hospital of Baltimore.

A diplomate of the Board in Obstetrics and Gynecology, he is a fellow of the Academy of Obstetrics and Gynecology and the American Society for the Study of Sterility. He is an associate editor of *Fertility and Sterility* and Vice-President of the Planned Parenthood Federation of America from whom he received the Lasker Award in 1947.

Dr. Guttmacher has published extensively on infertility, contraception, induction of labor, and the history of medicine. He is the author of the pocketbook, "Having a Baby."

Chauncey Belknap, lawyer, was re-elected Treasurer. Mr. Belknap is a member of the firm of Patterson, Belknap, and Webb in New York City and has been a Director of the Eugenics Society for many years.

Frederick Osborn, demographer of New York City, was re-elected Secretary.

Directors of the Society will be elected at the Annual Meeting. Suggestions for candidates should be sent to the Chairman of the Nominating Committee, American Eugenics Society, 230 Park Avenue, New York 17, N. Y.

Editor's Note:

Comment by Robert C. Cook and Frederick Osborn on The Eugenic Hypothesis has been published in EUGENICS QUARTERLY, September 1955, pp 129-132 and December, 1955, pp. 194-197.

The following letters continue this discussion. Copies of the original presentation of The Eugenic Hypothesis by Frederick Osborn are available upon request to the Editor. Readers are invited to contribute their comments.

To the Editor:

I have read with interest the exchange of comment concerning the validity of the Eugenic Hypothesis (Cook, 1955 a, b; Osborn, 1955). Although the main objections of Robert C. Cook are now admitted to have been based on a misunderstanding, the same misunderstanding and similar objections may still linger in the mind of some skeptics. In any event, the genetic basis of the Eugenic Hypothesis seems to deserve closer scrutiny than it has received up to now, and I think this scrutiny will reveal no points of conflict with present genetic theory.

The Eugenic Hypothesis is expressed by its author as follows (Osborn, p. 240): "If the environment from childhood includes those influences which make for full development of the desire for children, then those individuals most susceptible to the stimulus of the environment will tend to have more children than will their less responsive fellows. . . . The response would be voluntary, a selection drawn out by the environment itself, so that in so far as children tend to resemble their parents for either hereditary or environmental reasons, there would be in each generation a proportionate increase in the number of people best fitted to the environment."

Cook objected, first, to "the assumption that 'group inheritance'—a transmission *en bloc*—of a whole constellation of desirable characteristics is a biological possibility." As Cook understood it, the Eugenic Hypothesis required *inheritance* of the desire

for children and, further, linkage of this with all valuable genetic qualities. Quite the contrary! The Eugenic Hypothesis depends upon the possibility of *determining* the desire for children through socio-cultural influences. As I see it, there are only two other major assumptions implicit in the Eugenic Hypothesis. One is that responsiveness to our socio-cultural environment is partly determined by genetic variations within the species. The other is that this responsiveness itself is the trait of primary interest for positive eugenics. None of these assumptions appears to be seriously disputed.

According to the Eugenic Hypothesis, desire for children and responsiveness to the environment will be linked not genetically, but by the deliberate creation of a *Eugenic Environment*. This environment would be designed to stimulate the desire for children in persons most responsive to their total environment, without influencing those whose interests were narrower or whose physical and mental handicaps made child-rearing too burdensome. Of course, the Eugenic Environment can achieve its purpose only if, at the same time, adequate contraception makes fertility dependent upon desire for children (*vide infra*).

A second objection was phrased by Cook as follows: "There is a further hard-to-define Lamarckian flavor to the Eugenic Hypothesis that seems to run counter to biological realities." Before we argue about this "hard-to-define" flavor, let us make some effort to define it! Lamarckianism is the doctrine that acquired characters are biologically heritable. There are two points at which such a doctrine is suggested by the Eugenic Hypothesis. First, Osborn says that *even in so far as children resemble their parents for environmental reasons, a eugenic environment would multiply the people best fitted to it*. It is not truly Lamarckian to believe in social inheritance of acquired behavior patterns. Competition and selection among cultures can operate independently of and even in opposition to